

SLCC JOURNAL

San Leandro Computer Club

June, 1990

ATARI – TIGER

or



Pussycat

This and Other Questions - not Answered Inside!

Micro World

If we measure a computer's success by the efficiency and abundance of its software then we must conclude that the Atari ST is a success. The continuing development of serious Atari ST/TT products such as Outline, Script, and Sketch makes the ST a viable graphic arts tool.

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We all still need Atari to advertise! The ST/STE STACY and TT are great machines and terrific values when compared to the competition, if we can get people to compare. You can tell Atari to hire me, Bill Yerger, as marketing director, and I'll get the job done. In the meanwhile, check out these prices:

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80 meg hard disk	795
10 Meg Floppy Drive	500
Kraft Track Ball (Great!)	89
Cordless Mouse	115
2400 Baud Modem	125
New Calamus Fonts (3)	23
New Pagestream Fonts(3)	30

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Editor: DeWayne Stuart (887-3028)
(Under Duress!)

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Many thanks to those who take the time and effort to contribute to this publication!

San Leandro Computer Club

P.O. Box 1506

San Leandro, CA 94577-0374

An independent, non-profit organization of Atari microcomputer users. Membership provides access to the club print and magnetic libraries, subscription to the **Journal** and participation in club activities. See membership application elsewhere in this issue for details on an opportunity you can't pass up.

Club Officers:

President Keith Sammons 887-2008
Vice-President Bob Woolley 865-1672
Treasurer Jim Hood 534-2197
Secretary Jim Moran 523-9265

Elections are this month. Replace the SCUM!

Program Chairman:

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Software Chairmen:

8-Bit [Save the 8-Bit market singlehandedly. Call 887-2008]
16-Bit Ken Hinton 339-8055

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Music SIG Terry Abbot 562-4526
Business SIG Ralf Herman (408) 257-7760
8-Bit Beginners Glenn Fowler 530-7128

Disk Librarians:

8-Bit Glenn Fowler 530-7128
16-Bit Ken Hinton 339-8055

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June • 1990

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Advertising Rates: Full page for 3 Issues \$100. Single issue prices are Full page \$50, Half page \$30, Quarter Page \$18, and Business Card size \$5.

OFFICIAL SLCC BBS

8/16--Key System (415) 352-5528
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(415) 887-2158,
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Let's talk about a dual ANTIC modification.

The one improvement needed on the 8-bit Atari is better graphics. Not more resolution, necessarily, but more colors/shades per pixel. The basic configuration of the 8-bit is a 64K computer connected to a home television, either thru the antenna (ugh) or the A/V inputs. If you are really into nice video, you may even have a Super-VHS jack on your TV that allows you to use the superb separate chroma output on your 8-bit (so, why doesn't the ST have one, guys?). Either way, that's all you need to do really great stuff with the 8-bit. So, why do all these "new", "super" computers have 768x200 screens with 4096 colors? Beats me! The display alone costs more than a whole Atari system - and you can't even hook it up to your VCR!! Lots of people (we're talking normal folks, here...) buy nice TVs, why should they have to buy a dinky, expensive monitor too? Somehow, we have lost the tremendous advantage of using a TV as the primary display for our personal computing - particularly the "fun" part, games and graphics. Yeah, sure. You can do an ST game on your TV, but look at the loss of detail! All that programming effort is lost to anyone using a TV, and monitor users don't quite get all they could have. A poor compromise. Face it, you can't do more than 160x200 on a color TV, period.

OK, so what? What's this got to do with the 8-bit - it works great on a TV?

Well, not really. The 8-bit can only display 4 colors at once at 160x200 - not too impressive. Wouldn't it be nice to have 16 colors instead? Not 16 colors as we think of them, but different intensities as well (color is actually hue, intensity is referred to as luminance). So, we whip up a new, full custom, ANTIC and GTIA chip that has a new 160x200 16 color mode, right?

Not me. I can't afford it, Atari probably wouldn't allow it, and nobody would use it unless it was compatible with the old modes (imagine having to do a different graphic for the old and new chips! Don't laugh.... that's what the other guys do!). What we want is a solution that allows the same graphic to exist on an unmodified system in 4 colors and display in 16 colors on the improved machines - just like Basic and MAC65 run great on a 40 column or 80 column screen. Can that be done?

Sure. Just use two ANTICs and two GTIAs.

Each set runs from it's own memory - the main set from normal memory, the background set from background memory. We allow the background memory and chips to be loaded any time \$D301 (54017), bit 1 is 0. You might recognize that bit as being the Basic enable bit in an XL or XE. In this hack, I used a 1200XL which does not recognize

that bit since this allows me to use a Rambo upgrade with no conflicts at \$D301. The computer powers on with that bit set to 1 - disabling the background set. The system at this point functions exactly the same as a standard Atari as long as bit 1 is not brought low. Once it is reset, the background pair is set to the same parameters as the main pair. In this mode you set up the background set any way you wish - any graphics mode, any configuration. The screen will display whatever you are doing so you can see the results (within certain limits). When you are finished with your background, switch bit 1 high and write the main screen. Nothing you do now will have any effect on the background display. You can set the background to mode 3, plot vertical bands of color, and then scroll a mode 0 screen of text on the main screen. No problem at all. Plot GR.11 colors in background and GR.9 intensities on the main screen. You can place text on the background screen and draw a GR.15 screen in main.

Anything.

Except DLIs or P/M graphics in background (you CAN do custom display lists in background. Use your imagination!)

How do the two displays interact?

The normal output of a GTIA is a color register, 8 bits wide. The high order 4 bits define a color and the 4 low order bits set a luminance. Using two GTIAs means you have two color adjustment pots and it is fairly easy to set them so that each set produces a slightly different color, giving you 32 different colors instead of 16. You normally see the main sets color, but if the background luminance is set higher than 7, then the background color is used. This gives you 7 different colors out of 32 on any line.

For a luminance, we use the 4 bits of the main set and the 3 low order bits of the background set. Bit 4 of the main set are unchanged in any mode. Bits 5, 6 and 7 of the main set are exclusive ORed with bits 4, 5 and 6 of the background set (which allows you to turn on or off main bits 5, 6 and 7). The lowest background bit, bit 7 (only active in GTIA 9), is a 1/32 value bit - giving you 32 luminance values.

So, you end up with 32 hues and 32 luminance values, allowing 1024 colors. Of particular interest is the 32 grey scale mode - the change between each value is so slight that the bars look continuous.

And, an unmodified computer can be used to display the same graphic at reduced resolution!

Bob Woolley

UPDATE

by Darryl May
June 90

I've returned from Colorado State University. During the semester I pounded my fingers on the numerous dumb terminals, which operate as a collection of strange terminal types. Most of my time was spent figuring out which terminal type to enter, in order to get even the cursor keys to work. It is sure nice to be back on my ST. I had a chance to program in LISP and PROLOG, while increase my skills in c. At the library I gleamed over The San Francisco Chronicle, checking out the number on the Atari stock and for any news on ATARI.

Speaking of Atari stock it was at 5 and 5/8 (up 5/8s), on Friday the 25th.

I was able to visit "Computer Rock", the only ST computer store in San Francisco. It's located out by the ocean in a small and quiet shopping area. "Dragon's Liar" had just arrived and I was given a test drive. The game seems to have a smoother transition between scenes than the arcade version and all the sound and graphics are there on 4 diskettes. It has

a good selection of software and a variety of magazines too.

I also had a chance to visit Herb's Discount Software in Fremont. It's easy to get there just take the "Durham" exit from 880 then take a right turn on S.Grimmer, it's the first light, then take Grimmer for a couple of blocks. Look for "Enterprise" street on your right. Go all the way down Enterprise, then at the end of the street take the driveway on the right. Herb's is located at the bend of the building with a big open door. You can't miss it. Why should you go there? They had two specials on Atari software. On the 8-bit side you can get 3 games for \$10 including "Space Invaders", "Gorf", "Deluxe Invaders", "Demon Attack" on diskette and other titles on diskette and cassette. For your ST you can get 3 games for \$25 including "Winter Games", "The Pawn", "California Games", "Hacker II", "Gato" and about 15 other titles. Plus another 20 ST programs are at discounted rates. I picked up "Death Sword" and "Axe of Rage" by Epyx and what seemed like the last copy of "Carrier Command". "Death Sword" is an arcade action sword battle with digitized sound for one or two players.

The ad featured a laser disc player for \$70. What a deal, I thought. I visited HSC in Santa Clara to see the player up close. What I found was that the units were manufactured in 1985 and most of them seemed to have been tested in 1988. The players had come from arcade games and other such things. There were no controls on the player but only a 15 pin port. There was also a computer adapter unit that could attach to the player's port and to a computer by way of an IBM card. There's also a 9 pin serial port on the adaptor. I was hoping to connect the player to my ST but no instruction manuals or cables were included. I could not even find the connectors for all the ports on the player and adapter. Since making cables is not my strong suite I didn't end up getting the player. But if you are a little more adventurous than I; see if you can get this set up working.

See the May 14th issue of MicroTimes for more information on Herb's discount software (p.8) and HSC's video disc player (p.193).

**REMEMBER TO VOTE
June 5th**

ATARI's Annual Meeting

Jim Hood

Annual meetings are largely perfunctory events, unless some group buys a share of stock to protest a company policy or someone is trying to gain control of the company.

There was nothing like that at the May 15th Atari annual meeting. The formal portion of the meeting lasted about five minutes and consisted of approving the current Board of Directors and auditors for another year. Everyone received over 47 million votes approving their retention.

Kind of like our club elections.

A discussion and presentation period followed the formal meeting.

Sam Tramiel said that 1.5 million STs have been shipped worldwide since their introduction.

Two Weeks?

He expected the STe to be introduced in the U.S. at the end of May. If "introduced" means "shipped to dealers" you can check with your local one to see whether it made it.

He said the TT, running a year and a half behind schedule, should be shipping in the third quarter (*deja vu*) and would be worth the wait.

He believes that Atari needs the interest which the TT will generate to get people into stores and stores into the dealer network, so attempts to rebuild the U.S. market, which is essentially zero, will await the TT.

At last year's annual meeting, a graphics demo was running on a prototype TT stuffed into an AT type case. At this year's meeting a similar demo was running on a machine clothed in an actual TT case.

I wish the TT didn't remind me of the 1450XLD. Remember how that machine sounded so great for so long, with preview articles in all the leading Atari magazines? And remember how

the Old Atari folded before it was ever produced?

There were brief overhead projector presentations about the TT and Portfolio.

This is the third year I've gone to the Atari annual meeting and I still haven't seen them do a good slide or OHP presentation.

This year they tended to stick as much information as possible on each OHP transparency, which created hard to read screens full of small text.

Among the programs said to be under development for the Portfolio was one, called a city guide, which intrigued me.

That's because I was recently in Southern California on business, needed to buy some film and realized that even if I checked the Yellow Pages for photo dealers I wouldn't know which dealers were close to me.

At the time I thought a market existed for Pacific Bell's Information Services Group to check a telephone location and provide a listing of the closest dealers for whatever product or service a caller needed.

This sort of search might be handled in a sophisticated city guide on a Portfolio memory card. So, for me, the program concept was one of the more interesting things at the meeting.





Sam said 30,000 Lynx game machines were shipped in '89, and the machine is now available in both the U.S. and Europe along with six games. Seven more games are expected by the end of July and thirty by year end.

You may have read in the June *STart* editorial, or in *Z*Net* that Atari fired the *Atari Explorer* staff. At the annual meeting, Sam said this was done as part of relocating the magazine's editorial offices to Sun-

ny vale, where a new editor has been hired. I have enjoyed reading David Ahl's material since his *Creative Computing* days. I was surprised, and impressed, when he was hired to start the *Atari Explorer*. I was also im-

pressed with the amount of editorial independence that he, Betsy Staples and John Jainschigg seemed to have, given the Tramiels' reputation as autocratic employers.

So the explanation that they were fired over Betsy Staple's Spring issue editorial, and probably a general erosion of rapport, seems more realistic to me than Sam's corporate version.

The issue of the *Atari Explorer* that finally hit the newsstands lists Betsy

Staple's editorial in the table of contents, but it has been replaced with one from John Jainschigg.

Meanwhile, Back At The Meeting

As usual, Jack and his sons were mixing with the attending stockholders and employees before the meeting started. As usual, they seemed friendly and accessible. The biggest difference at this year's meeting was not having Jack speak during the presentations or the question and answer period.

After the meeting, Sam asked Bill Yerger, of MicroWorld, to meet with him in the near future. Does this mean Bill's letter writing campaign (see the inside front cover) is paying off? Maybe Atari figures it would be cheaper to hire him for awhile than to continue opening, distributing and reading all the letters.

It was good to see Bob Brodie at the meeting. As you know he has been traveling to lots of Atari shows and User Group meetings around the U.S. and Canada while trying to get his family settled into their new home.

I'm sorry to report that Bob said his father-in-law recently passed away and I'm sure you join the SLCC and me in expressing our condolences to his family.



Page Fillers

In the May *Current Notes* article "Typesetting with the ST," Bill Price gives an extensive overview of various desktop publishing options available to ST and Mega users.

Atari reportedly made an agreement with ISD to bundle *Calamus* in a desktop publishing package with their laser printer and Mega computer.

With *Calamus*, *Outline Art* and *Touch-up* using similar interfaces and

Migraph working on a matching interface for the next version of *Easy-Draw*, these could represent an interface standard.

That doesn't bode well for me, because I have a hard time with each of the existing programs.

The May issue of *Computer Graphics World* has a large article on using the Inmos Transputer chip for graphics processing. The article focuses on its use in various PC and

Amiga boards and doesn't mention the Atari ATW.

The current T800 Transputer, used in the ATW, is a 25MHz chip with a peak speed of 4.3 MFLOPS. Inmos is developing a new chip, the H-1, which is expected to be rated at 100MIPS and 20MFLOPS. At the Atari annual meeting, Sam Tramiel said Atari expects to start using the new chip when it becomes available.

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June 1990

SLCC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5 Main Meeting 8:00 P.M. San Leandro Library	6	7	8	9
10	11 ST Meeting 8:00 P.M. San Leandro Library	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 Midi Sig 8 PM	19 Journal Deadline	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 ST Beginner's Sig 7:30 P.M.	28	29	30

Special Interest Group (SIG) leaders and their phone numbers are in the Table of Contents.

Membership Application for the San Leandro Computer Club

Yes! I would like to receive 12 months of the SLCC JOURNAL along with other membership benefits, including software discounts, training, technical assistance and much, much more - all for the low, low price of \$20.00 (or \$40.00 if I am outside the US or Canada).

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____
(Street) (City) (State) (ZIP)

Home Phone: _____ (Optional) **Membership No.**

Computer(s) _____

Software Interests: ☐ Home Finance ☐ Desktop Publishing ☐ Games ☐ Scientific
☐ Business ☐ Word Processing ☐ Educational ☐ Music ☐ Art

Some interesting ways I use my computer: (Club members are interested in new usages for home, work and play.) _____

MORAN'S MINUTES

General Meeting Minutes also.
May 1, 1990

The meeting was called to order by President Sammons at 8:05 PM with all Officers present.

A couple of errors in the monthly meeting calendar were pointed out. Both the ST SIG and the MIDI SIG dates were shown one week early. (The new editor will do 3021 pushups to atone for this indiscretion.) *

The President introduced Bill Yerger, tonight's guest speaker and the owner of the MICRO-WORLD store in Berkeley. Bill and his developer gave a demonstration of the high resolution cards they are developing for the ST's and discussed some of the better deals his store is currently offering.

The high resolution cards and monitors while not cheap are inexpensive when the lines of resolution are considered. The 1040/780 card and monitor are about \$1600, the 800/600 about \$1000.

Bill said that he was giving excellent prices on all ATARI equipment. Memory upgrades can be had at very good prices

The newest item they are working on is using a FAX machine as a FAX and high grade scanner for computers.

Bill concluded his presentation with a varied, entertaining and enjoyable question and answer period.

NOMINATIONS,

Nominations for Officers were taken as follows,
President -- Sammons
V. Pres. -- Woolley
Treasurer -- Hood
Secretary -- Moran

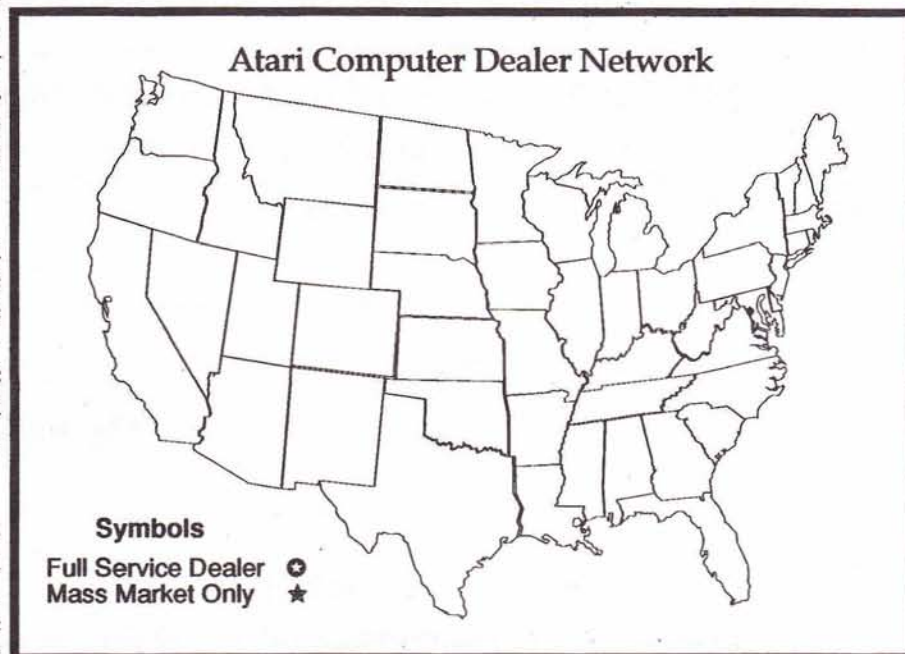
There will be another chance to nominate members for office prior to the election being held at the June Regular Meeting.

The club needs volunteers to head up the telecommunication SIG and to assist with the JOURNAL. Anyone interested should contact any officer.

Being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted -
Jim Moran - Secretary

*(As soon as I get my first paycheck... ED



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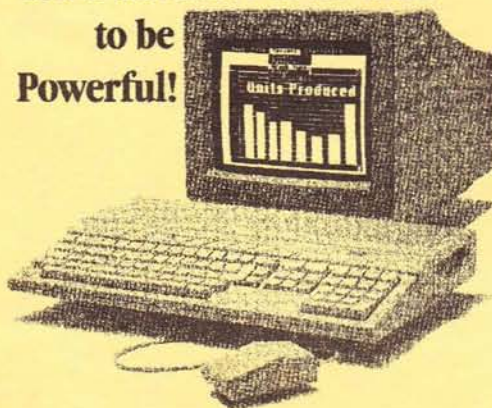
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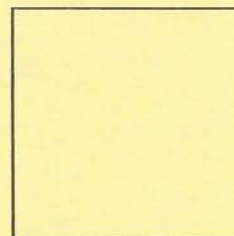
Since he is unopposed in his bid for re-election, our most exalted leader sees no reason to waste his time writing anything for you lowly duespaying members.

He says he may get LDW to come talk about *LDW Power*, but if he doesn't, tough! Just keep buying those raffle tickets!

I personally feel quite sad seeing Keith manifest this attitude, so I have taken it upon myself, at great personal sacrifice, to make sure there will be a plentiful supply of raffle items, including several games from Winner's Circle and MicroWorld.

Your Most Humble Treasurer,
Jim Hood

San Leandro Computer Club
P.O. Box 1506
San Leandro, CA 94577-0374



General Meeting June 5, 1990

Elections; both state and club.
Remember - An uninformed vote
is worse than no vote at all, so
Don't Vote If You Don't Know!

Peter Corona:

Hope you're feeling better after
your open heart surgery. Hurry
back - the P Sig misses you!

